

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Highway Spring

Site Code S.USCOHP*20693

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 1709 Site Class PCA
Site Alias None

Network of Conservation Areas (NCA)

<u>NCA Site ID</u>	<u>NCA Site Code</u>	<u>NCA Site Name</u>
-		No Data

LOCATORS

Nation United States Latitude 373704N
State Colorado Longitude 1064110W

Quad Code Quad Name

37106-E6 Beaver Creek Reservoir

County

Rio Grande (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name

13010001 Rio Grande headwaters

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	8,400.00	Feet	2,560.00	Meters
Maximum Elevation	8,400.00	Feet	2,560.00	Meters

Site Description

The site encompasses beaver ponds, old oxbows, wet meadows, and scrub/shrub wetlands in addition to riparian communities representing all successional age classes. The site occurs near the confluence of Tewksberry Creek, Beaver Creek, and the South Fork of the Rio Grande. The confluence of these drainages in addition to the many beaver ponds located in the area have created a diverse riparian and wetland complex in a relatively broad floodplain. The riparian vegetation is represented by late (*Populus angustifolia*/*Picea pungens*), mid (*Populus angustifolia*/*Alnus incana*), and early seral (*Populus angustifolia*/*Salix exigua*) plant communities, indicating that fluvial processes (e.g., seasonal flooding, channel scouring, and sediment deposition) are still intact. Narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) and coyote willow (*Salix exigua*) were found on point bars and areas of recent disturbance. Thinleaf alder is present in slightly more stable areas, where disturbance from flooding is not as frequent. In areas furthest from the river channel and on slightly higher ground, mature narrowleaf cottonwood and Colorado blue spruce (*Picea pungens*) are the dominant species. Many beaver ponds and channels were found throughout the site. More recent ponds are dominated by narrowleaved bur-reed (*Sparganium angustifolium*), mare's tail (*Hippuris vulgaris*), and white water-buttercup (*Ranunculus aquatilis*). Around older beaver ponds, large stands of mountain willow (*Salix monticola*) occur with a diverse understory of Bluejoint reedgrass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*), sedges (*Carex* spp.), and mixed forbs. Wet meadows are dominated by Baltic rush (*Juncus balticus*), Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), and various sedges. Beaked sedge (*Carex utriculata*), water parsnip (*Sium suave*), purple checkermallow (*Sidalcea neomexicana*), and golden banner (*Thermopsis montana*) occupy a large oxbow on the south side of the site. This area has accumulated approximately 25 centimeters of peat and is obviously saturated year round.

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 01/15/2000
Designer Rocchio, F.J.

Boundary Justification

The entire floodplain of the area is included to allow natural fluvial processes and beaver activity to continue,

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both of which are crucial for the viability of the elements. Although upstream areas along each of the three drainages are not included, activities in these watersheds could potentially affect the elements.

Primary Area 312.72 Acres 126.55 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The site supports a good and excellent example of two riparian plant communities vulnerable on a global scale, a good example of a widespread riparian plant community, a fair and good example of two willow carrs vulnerable on a global scale, and one excellent example of a wetland plant community.

Other Values Rank No Data

Other Values Comments

No Data

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

No Data

Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

Exotics Comments

No Data

Offsite

No Data

Information Needs

No Data

ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

<u>Element State ID</u>	<u>State Scientific Name</u>	<u>State Common Name</u>	<u>Global Rank</u>	<u>State Rank</u>	<u>Driving Site Rank</u>
24738	<i>Populus angustifolia</i> / <i>Salix exigua</i> Woodland	Narrowleaf Cottonwood Riparian Forests	G4	S4	No
19341	<i>Sparganium angustifolium</i> Herbaceous Vegetation	Montane Floating/submergent Palustrine Wetlands	G4	SU	No
24541	<i>Populus angustifolia</i> / <i>Alnus incana</i> Woodland	Montane Riparian Forest	G3	S3	No
24773	<i>Alnus incana</i> / <i>Cornus sericea</i> Shrubland	Thinleaf Alder-Red-osier Dogwood Riparian Shrubland	G3G4	S3	Yes
24809	<i>Salix monticola</i> / Mesic Forbs Shrubland	Montane Riparian Willow Carr	G4	S3	No
24514	<i>Salix monticola</i> / <i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i> Shrubland	Montane Willow Carr	G3	S3	No

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
165924	Kettler, S., J. Rocchio, R. Schorr, J. Burt. 2000. Biological Inventory of Rio Grande and Conejos Counties, Colorado. Unpublished report prepared for The Nature Conservancy. 234 pp.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 01/15/2000
Version Author Rocchio, F.J.

Disclaimer

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